



March 2015 Newsletter



The First Legislative “Funnel” Deadline Is Behind Us

Funnel Week is Over

The “funnel” deadline at the legislature passed on Thursday. This self-imposed deadline helps narrow the number of bills being considered by the legislature by tabling discussion on any bill that hasn’t passed a full committee in the originating chamber.

The Education Savings Account bill that House republicans chose to work on, HSB 203, did not come up for a vote in the House Education Committee. The chair of the committee did not call up the bill for a vote because of his and other members’ budget concerns.

The issue itself, however, is not dead for the session. we are confident that school choice measures are still on the table for discussion this session and our ESA bills (all three of them) are still eligible for discussion again next session.

We are optimistic, in large part because of you. Our system tracks the number of emails sent by you and as we look at those numbers and those of our coalition partners, we are amazed! The number of responses more than tripled compared to last year’s effort! The response from legislators has been encouraging.

Regardless of the outcome of this legislative session, we are grateful to you and trust God is working on our behalf. IACS, along with Iowa ACE, the Iowa Catholic Conference, and others will continue to work hand-in-hand until the end of the session and may need your help again. Keep an eye out for alerts!

Education Celebration A Success!

Despite the weather and a number of schools unable to join us; we had a great turnout and a wonderful event on Tuesday. Photos can be found on our Facebook page and we’ll be putting some up on our website soon.

A special thanks to Trish Wilger and everyone at the Iowa Alliance for Choice in Education for their hard work putting on the event. Our speakers, including Trish, Virginia Walden Ford, Rep. Chris Hagenow, and Sen. Jerry Behn all did a fantastic job. As soon as Iowa ACE announces next year’s date, we hope you’ll start making plans to join us. We’ll need you there!

Organizations like IACS and Iowa ACE are only effective when our parents, teachers, and community members are willing to take action. Thank you for doing so this year. Keep it up!



Other Updates

There are a number of other issues we are working on or watching this session. Here are just a few:

Independent Accreditation - we are working to strike the sunset provision in the Code to ensure this option is available to our schools permanently. Considering the great experience our schools are having and the lack of concerns raised by others, we are confident we'll eventually achieve this goal.

Tax Credits - We will support any efforts by Iowa ACE and legislators to make positive changes to the number of STO tax credits and/or expand the Tuition & Textbook Tax Credit programs.

Transportation & Textbook Funding - These two line-items in the budget fund public schools for the purpose of assisting nonpublic schools to provide needed transportation and textbooks/technology to our students. It is an ongoing effort to ensure they are fully funded.

Other Issues - We are watching and working on a number of bills that would affect school start date, laws regarding abuse of students by employees and volunteers, graduation requirements, and many others. Keep an eye on our website social media pages for details.

Iowa School Choice In The News

School choice is getting attention in Iowa. Here are a few stories you may not have seen yet:

[Education Advocates Celebrate School Choice](#)

[Uncommon Choice: A Way Forward for Education in Iowa, and America](#) (by Casey Shutt at Morning Star Academy)

[Education Savings Accounts Explained](#)

[Iowa legislators fail to move impasse over school funding](#)

[School Choice Update - Caffeinated Thoughts Radio](#)

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